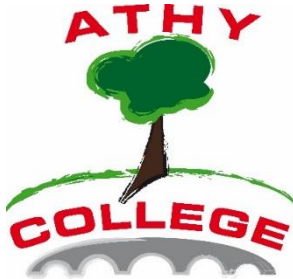


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Athy College Kildare

School Tours & Trips Policy

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Approval Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Approval Date: _____

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MISSION STATEMENT

In a caring school we are dedicated to fostering educational excellence empowering all students to reach their full potential – academic and social, physical and spiritual. Through partnership and cooperation, we openly respect and nurture the dignity and uniqueness of each individual’.

ETHOS

Athy College is a caring school. The staff are dedicated to fostering educational excellence and earnestly endeavour to empower all students to reach their full potential – academic and social, physical and spiritual. Through partnership and cooperation, the staff of Athy College respect and nurture the dignity and uniqueness of everyone.

Athy College defines education as the on-going development of all students so that they may realise their true and best selves. The college motto is “Fas agus Foghlaim” (Lifelong Learning). From the outset students are taught they are partners in their own education.

The school aims to prepare students for public examinations, in an age when academic qualifications are indispensable for admission to further education and entry into employment. The school recognises that its students are of varying cultural and social backgrounds and have a wide variety of aspirations and abilities.

The school embraces the vital role that parents, and guardians play in the overall education for their children. The school also recognises the importance of the community in which the student lives. For this reason, every effort is made to ensure that the student is aware of his/her role in the community and is encouraged to be positively involved in the wider community.

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INTRODUCTION

School trips/outings are an integral part of the educational experience of Athy College. There are many benefits to school educational outings and tours.

They assist in:

- Enhancing classroom learning
- Enhancing students' personal and social development thus supporting students' wellbeing
- Improving language acquisition and skills
- Promoting greater understanding among other cultures
- Broadening cultural and intellectual experiences.
- Fostering inclusion (e.g. students with additional needs)
- Helping teachers with an opportunity to get to know students in a non-classroom environment.

Kildare Wicklow Education Training Board (KWETB) believes that students can derive a great deal of educational benefit from participating in well planned school tours and field trips. Such activities give students the opportunity to engage in experiences not available in the classroom, and help develop a student's imaginative skills, encourage greater independence and enhance the student's social and cultural development. These guidelines are designed to help principals, teachers, Board of Management members and others to ensure that students stay safe and healthy as they enjoy the educational experiences of school tours and field trips.

Most school tours and field trips take place without incident and KWETB is satisfied that our teachers are already demonstrating a high level of safety awareness. These guidelines are designed to encourage teachers, to ensure that good planning and attention to safety measures are in place to prevent accidents on all school tours/field trips.

KWETB expects that all tours and field trips will be thoroughly planned. Reasonable care must be exercised in the nature of the trip that is chosen, the venue, the means of transportation, the level of supervision, the demands on the physical resources of the students, having regard to their age and capacity and the potential dangers to which they may be exposed.

OVERVIEW

This policy applies to all staff members of Athy College who take students off site, whether in the Republic of Ireland or abroad. It is also applicable to the students participating in the activity and to their parents/guardians.

The policy is written in the context of Circular Letter M20/04 issued by the Department of Education and Skills which states that: 'The objective of an educational tour should be that it should provide a significant benefit to the educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of the maximum number of pupils in the particular grade(s) taking part in the tour and which benefit cannot be provided by in-school activities alone'.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the DES Circular M20/04; Athy College's Child Safeguarding Statement; Child Protection Procedures for Primary & Post – Primary Schools, 2017; Athy College's Health and Safety Statement, Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy.

The following also apply to this policy:

- Children First Act, 2015
- The Education Act, 1998
- The Equality Act, 2004
- The Education Welfare Act, 2000
- The Equal Status Act, 2000
- The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004
- Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct
- General Data Protection Regulation, 2018

The planning of school tours and trips should be done well in advance and a procedure should be put in place whereby students can pay for the tour/trip over a period of time.

Educational tours of more than one day's duration should be arranged to coincide with normal school holidays as set out in CL M20/04. 2.4 If an educational tour/field trip is an integral part of a school programme the Board of Management of the school may grant permission for it to be held during term time and as per CL M20/04.

The Board of Management must ensure that students who are not participating in the tour are adequately catered for while their teachers are away on school tours/trips.

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Appropriate arrangements must be made for the conduct of all classes in accordance with Circular PPT01/03.

In the planning of the tour/trip cognisance must be taken of the impact the tour/trip will have on the normal work of the school and the numbers of absent teachers should be kept to a minimum. For local and one day events and field trips Form ST1 should be completed and retained in the school.

PLANNING

- Planning in advance is essential
- Contact reputable tour operator/service provider
- Contact venue. Is it suitable for the group?
- What are the transport options?
- Who will lead the group and who will supervise it and the level of supervision that will pertain
- Who will pay for the activity?

The school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures apply to all school tours. Parents/Guardians will be notified, in advance, of all tours pertaining to the students. Before a student is accepted on a tour parents/guardians must sign the appropriate consent form. The consent form must be signed and received by the school not later than the specified date (see appendix 1 for sample Consent Form). The school authorities retain the right to refuse a student permission to participate in a school tour.

APPROVAL

The tour leader(s) must obtain permission from the Board of Management, Principal/Deputy Principal to take students on a school tour. Prior to seeking permission, the Tour Leader(s) must enter into discussions with the Principal /Deputy Principal to ensure that the proposed tour dates do not impinge upon the normal teaching routine of the school year. All school tours must conform to the criteria as set down in the Department of Education circular M20/04 relating to educational tours by School Groups (inside and outside the state). All foreign tours and selected national tours must be organised through a travel company.

SUPERVISION

KWETB expects that all school tours, field trips and extracurricular activities will be adequately supervised. The group leader must ensure that all supervisors understand their roles and responsibilities at all times and that they are fully briefed as to the rules, regulations and health and safety requirements pertaining to the particular trip before departure. All supervisors have a responsibility to act as positive role models for students in terms of their actions and behaviour and in particular in relation to smoking and consuming alcohol etc. Regular head counting of students should take place, particularly before leaving any venue. All supervisors should carry a list of all students and adults involved in the activity. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell students what to do if they become separated from the group.

PREPARING STUDENTS

Students who are well briefed about an activity will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Students should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the activity will entail. They must understand what standards of behaviour are expected of them and why rules must be followed. Students should be made aware of any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others. Students whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential activities the group leader should consider whether such students should be sent home early. Parents and students should be told in advance about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a student will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

Parents of students who intend to participate in tour/field trip will be informed in writing of details pertaining to the activity. Before residential visits or when students are to travel abroad or engage in adventure activities parents should be invited to attend a briefing meeting where details (oral and written) of the proposed trip will be provided and the acceptable code of behaviour will be given to parents and students to sign. A parental consent form may be required for each student in the group. (See Appendix 1). The school management may decide that students with certain medical conditions may not be brought on trips. Such decisions shall be taken on the basis of medical evidence and in the interest of the health and safety of the student and others. The group leader should inform parents that they will be expected to fund the early return of a student whose conduct gives rise for concern on a trip. In the event

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of a home emergency, parents should contact the Principal or designated other person to inform them. The Principal will contact the group leader to inform and guide them. In the event of an emergency on the trip, students should not contact home directly, before the group leader/school contact has done so or as directed by the group leader.

ACCOMMODATION, FACILITIES, SERVICES

In so far as possible, Tour Leaders should take steps to determine the suitability of the location and adequacy of services and facilities that will be available to students & teachers participating in the tour. Accommodation, facilities and services should be clean, safe, fit for purpose and well managed.

INSURANCE

Public and Employer's Liability for field trips -The Committee's Public and Employer's Liability policies operate to cover the legal liability of the KWETB in relation to Educational Tours/Activities organised by Schools/Centres subject to the normal terms, conditions and exceptions of the policies. Where educational tours/activities involve activity of a specialist or high risk nature e.g. adventure sports, skiing, horse-riding, ice skating etc., schools/centres should ensure that the Centre providing the activity is a reputable provider and that evidence of their Public Liability Insurance including an indemnity to the KWETB is obtained. The current recommended limit of indemnity is €13 million.

Travel Insurance - Travel Insurance should be organised for educational tours/activities, which involve travelling abroad. School tour travel operators normally provide travel insurance as part of the tour package. However, when travel and accommodation is organized directly by the school/centre (e.g. language exchanges), travel insurance must be organised with the Travel Agency or an Insurance Broker. Please note the exclusions in the Travel Insurance Policy.

Personal Accident Insurances - The Public Liability Policy covers the legal liability of KWETB caused by the negligence of the KWETB or its employees. In some circumstances accidents may occur which are not the result of negligence. It is therefore recommended that all students engaged in sporting/high risk activities would take out Personal Accident insurance such as Brennan Insurance Company.

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PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Day Tours

- Day tours may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours.
- Any teacher planning to organise a school tour/trip (Tour Leader) must first inform the Principal or Deputy Principal of the intended date and nature of the activity, its educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the tour.
- Full details, including date, time and names of participating students must be posted on the staff room notice board or circulated internally by the Tour Leader as soon as possible before the event.
- The Tour Leader takes the responsibility to give each student a letter to take home giving full details of the tour and a Consent Form to be signed by parents/guardians and students.
- All students going on any tour during normal school hours must return the permission slip signed by parents/guardians, by the specified date, to the teacher in charge before the outing takes place. Students who have not returned permission forms may not participate in the tour.
- On all day tours there must be an appropriate ratio between the number of students and the number of staff travelling. This ratio will vary depending on the nature of the tour and the age of the students travelling. On a private coach there should be at least one member of staff in addition to the driver.
- One teacher on each bus will carry a Tour Kit complete with refuse sacks, illness bags, First Aid kit, and emergency contact numbers.
- Full school uniform must be worn on trips within Ireland. Depending on the nature and purpose of the trip, the P.E. uniform may be worn. The Tour Leader will clarify this with the Principal in advance.
- Before a student with a medical condition or pastoral care need is allowed to participate in an outing or tour, the school authorities must be confident that the needs of the student can be managed without compromising the health and safety of the student in question, the other students participating, or the itinerary of the trip. Each case will be considered on an individual basis by the outing Tour Leader and the Principal in consultation with the student and his/her parents.
- Up-to-date medical information on students with allergies, epilepsy or other medical conditions must be supplied in writing to the Tour Leader when the final balance is being paid for outings or tours. Where a student uses an

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EpiPen/inhaler or other medical device these need to be declared to the Tour Leader and arrangements made for their safe transport and safekeeping. Details should be supplied by parents on the Permission/Consent Form (See Appendix C: Consent Form)

- Where a student has particular special educational need, the outing Organiser will be responsible for liaising with the Principal, the relevant student(s), the relevant subject/class teachers, the Special Needs Assistant, the relevant parents, the destination business/college/organisation/tour operator, the taxi/coach business and any other organisation that may need to be involved in order to ensure that no student, insofar as is practicable, is prevented from accessing or participating in an educational outing because of a disability or special educational need.
- Day tours may involve a financial cost to the student.
- The school will always have the mobile/contact details numbers of the Coach Company or staff involved in case of delays or any other occurrences.
- For tours which extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that arrangements are in place for students' journey to/from the school or venue.
- Tours which take place to places of religious or historical significance may require additional protocols of observance regarding conduct and behaviour about which those participating in the tour will be informed in advance.
- Occasionally it may be suitable for Senior Cycle students (Fifth and Sixth Year students, and Transition Year students, in certain circumstances) to travel independently to and/or from an event. In such instances, the Organiser of the outing must advise parents/guardians in advance and receive written permission from the parents/guardians of these students. Junior Cycle students may not travel independently unless the parent/guardian states or approves otherwise. A member of staff should travel alone with a student only when specific parental permission has been obtained in writing or in the case of an emergency (e.g. ambulance).
- For sporting activities/extracurricular or co-curricular activities, individual students are not permitted to leave the school, with or without the permission of a parent/guardian, to support a team engaging in a competition. In the case of a final/national event, student support will be mandated by the school with consent forms filled in by parents/guardians in advance of those events.

TRIPS ABROAD / OVERNIGHT TOURS

Any member of staff who is considering taking students on an overnight tour must first seek approval from the Board of Management/School Principal.

All trips abroad, except for school exchanges, should be booked through a reputable travel agency with experience in the organisation of trips for schools and young people.

A recommended supervision ratio of 1 teacher to 10 students should apply. There should be enough teachers/supervisors in the group to cover an emergency.

Factors to consider for trips abroad include:

- Language – particularly common phrases
- Culture e.g. body language, rules and regulations of behaviour, dress codes, local customs, attitudes to gender etc.
- Airline and ferry regulations
- Drugs, alcohol usage
- Food and drink
- Money – how to carry currency, money and valuables discreetly
- How to use phones abroad and the code for phoning home
- What to do in an emergency

It is particularly important that parents are given the opportunity to meet teachers and others who will be taking the students overseas prior to departure

The group leaders must ensure that the group has relevant travel insurance.

It is desirable that one of the adults with the group should be able to speak and read the language of the visited country.

The group leader should ensure that all members of the group have valid passports and visas (if appropriate) in the early stages of planning the trip.

A photocopy of each individual passport should be taken for emergency use.

If a group includes students whose national or immigration status or entitlement to an Irish passport is in doubt, it is advisable to make early enquires to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Justice and Law Reform and the Passport Office.

Students other than EU nationals may require a separate passport and/or visa and may need to use separate passport control channels from the rest of the group.

If a student is subject to a care order, foster parents will need to ensure that Social Services consent to any proposed trip. If a student is a Ward of Court, the principal should seek advice from the Court in relation to trips abroad well in advance.

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Emergency medical facilities are available through reciprocal health care arrangements in EU countries to EU nationals. The European Health Insurance Card from the local Health Service Executive is the means of entitlement and must be carried by the group leader.

It is advisable for the group leader to take a contingency fund in case treatment must be paid for in advance and money has to be claimed back later.

The group leader should ensure that he/she obtains and takes with him/her:

- Travel tickets, passports, visas, accident reports forms and other essential documentation. It is advisable to carry a separate list of the numbers of any travel documentation/passports and photocopies of the group's documents in a sealed waterproof bag.
- A copy of the contract with the Travel Agency and/or centre/hotel, if appropriate.
- Medical documentation e.g. European Health Insurance Cards and significant medical histories. The group leader should carry these at all times.
- Parental consent forms and permission for the group leader to authorise emergency treatment on parental behalf.
- The phone numbers and addresses, at home and in school, of the Principal and/or of the school contact.
- The names and addresses of parents and telephone numbers (home and work) where they can be contacted.
- Copies of a list of group members and their details.
- Details of insurance arrangements and the company's telephone number.
- The name, address and telephone number (including emergency number) of the Travel Agency.
- The name, address and telephone number of the group's accommodation.
- Details of local hospital/medical and emergency services.

Full details of the trip must be retained by a designated person in the school while the trip is in progress. This should include:

- The itinerary and contact telephone numbers/addresses of the group.
- A list of group members and their details.
- Contact names, addresses, telephone numbers of the parents and next of kin.
- Copies of parental consent forms.
- Copies of travel documents, insurance documents, medical papers, etc.
- A copy of the contract with the Travel Agency, centre/hotel etc., if appropriate.

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It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that this information is always available. This is particularly important if the trip takes place when the school is closed.

The group leader must ensure that each student knows what action to take if there is an emergency or a problem.

The group leader and supervisors should know where the nearest Irish Embassy or Consulate is located and the telephone number.

The group leader needs to be aware that some diseases are more prevalent in some countries than in others and should know what action to take should a member of the group become infected, and what actions to take to prevent infections.

The group leader should resist any attempts to split the group while travelling. If this has to be done, then each group should have a separate group leader.

The group leader should ensure that all supervisors are aware of their duties and responsibilities during the trip.

EXCHANGE TRIPS

The success of an exchange trip depends largely on good relationships and communications with the partner school.

School exchanges differ from other trips abroad in that students will spend most of their time with host families and are, therefore, not always under the direct supervision of school staff.

The group leader should remember that host families are not subject to Irish law.

Students must be made aware of behavioural expectations agreed with the host family. The group leader should ensure the following:

- A good personal knowledge of the host school and its environs.
- Satisfactory 'pairing' arrangements. The partner school should inform the host family of any special, medical or dietary needs of their guests, age and gender.
- Matching of students should be appropriate.
- Parents, students and the host school should be clear about the arrangements for collecting and distributing students to families, and for transporting students throughout the exchange.
- The principal should retain a list of all the students involved and their family names, addresses and telephone numbers.

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- Students living with host families should have easy access to their teachers, usually by telephone.
- Parents should be made aware that their children will be living with host families and will not always be under direct teacher supervision.

The group leader should ensure that host families are thoroughly vetted including criminal background checks insofar as these are available. The group leader should, as a minimum requirement, seek assurances from the partner school as to host family suitability.

The exchange organiser should ensure that all necessary insurance arrangements are in place.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Teachers and others in charge of students during a school trip have a duty of care to ensure that the students are safe and healthy.

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school trip.

If an accident/incident happens, the priorities are to:

- Assess the situation
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group
- Attend to the casualty
- Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know about the incident

The group leader should take charge in an emergency and ensure that back up cover is arranged. All those involved in the school trip should be informed of the proposed arrangements in advance.

There should be a named school contact with all the necessary information about the trip. This person is the school's link with the group, the parents and the KWETB (where appropriate), and to provide assistance as necessary.

If an emergency occurs on a school trip, the main factors to consider include:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that the group is safe and looked after.
- Establish the identity of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them.

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- Ensure that parents are informed and in cases of minor injury adequate arrangements should be made, where appropriate, to get the student home, to liaise with the parents and to ensure that the injury is monitored.
- Ensure that all members who need to know are aware of the incident, and that all group members are following the emergency procedures.
- Ensure that teaching personnel accompany casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together.
- Notify the police if necessary.
- Notify the Irish Embassy/Consulate, if abroad and if appropriate.
- Inform the school contact
- The following details should be passed on to the school via the school contact:
 - Nature of incident
 - Date and time of the incident
 - Location of the incident
 - Names of casualties and nature of injuries
 - Names of others involved so that parents can be reassured
 - Names of witnesses
 - Action taken so far
 - Action yet to be taken and by whom
- Notify insurers, especially if medical attention is required. This may be done by the school contact.
- Notify the Travel Agent or transport operator. This may be done by the school contact.
- Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve vital evidence.
- Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident. Complete the KWETB's accident report form as soon as possible. Copies should be brought on residential and foreign trips.
- No one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to families. Media enquiries should be referred to a designated media contact in the home area.
- No one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.
- In the event of an emergency at home parents should contact the group leader/school contact, who will then liaise with the student.

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- In the event of an emergency on the trip, students should not contact home directly, before the group leader/school contact has done so or as directed by the group leader.
- Appropriate first aid equipment should be brought on all trips, as well as a person who is competent to use the contents of the first aid box.
- It is not always possible to assess whether group members not injured or directly involved in the incident have been traumatised or whether other students or staff in the school has been affected. In some cases, reactions do not surface immediately. It is advisable for schools to contact local community support services and to seek professional advice on how to help individuals and the school to cope with the effects of a particular incident.

STUDENT RETURN HOME

A situation may arise during the tour, whereby a student may be required to return home before the end of the tour. Reasons could include serious behavioural problems or a sudden emergency at home. In such a situation the Tour Leader will contact the students' parents/guardians and Principal and arrangements will be made. If a situation arises whereby a student must return home the family of the student(s) concerned will be liable for the full cost of the trip home.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Tour Leader must ensure that complete contact information is left on file in the office, available for use in the event of an emergency. The list should include:

- Names, addresses and home contact numbers of all those going on the tour.
- Full details of the itinerary, hotel addresses, phone numbers etc.
- A contact number, day or night, for the tour leader(s).

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

A member of the Senior Management Team will meet with students participating in school tours, prior to their departure date. The purpose of the meeting is to encourage students to focus on the educational dimension of the tour, to be mindful of personal safety, to cooperate fully with teachers .

REVIEW PROCEDURES

This policy will be reviewed and updated every three years or earlier if legislative or other factors suggest the need for a review.

APPENDIX 1 - PARENTAL CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE

Dear Parents/Guardians,

On(date) a school tour/trip/activity has been organised for(details of tour/trip). Students will leave the school at(time) and will return back to the school at approximately(time).

All school rules will apply on the tour/trip/activity and students are expected to adhere to them.

Please sign below giving your permission to attend and outline and relevant information that is required.

..... (Teacher)

I give permission for _____ to attend the school tour/trip/activity as outlined above.

Contact number: (1) _____ (2) _____

Pre-existing medical conditions:

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Declaration

I/we agree to my/our son/daughter receiving medication as instructed and any emergency dental, medical or surgical treatment, including anesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities present. I understand the extent and limitations of the insurance cover provided. I further agree that supervisors, under the direction of the group leader, may administer non-prescriptive medications in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or may contact the emergency/medical services if necessary.

APPENDIX 2 - RESIDENTIAL / FOREIGN TOUR RISK ASSESSMENT

GENERAL ACTION CHECKLIST TO REDUCE RISK

ALL RESIDENTIAL VISITS		Y / N	COMMENTS
1	Has the status of the tour operator/activity centre provider been checked?		
2	Does the tour operator/activity centre provider specialize in the organisation of the relevant tour/activity?		
3	Has the tour operator/activity centre provided a risk assessment on the area and the hotel/centre for suitability including activities to be participated in?		
4	Has the tour operator/activity centre confirmed that student rooms have individual locks to ensure personal safety?		
6	Have you drawn up an itinerary, including details of activities?		
8	Is any of the party qualified in First Aid? If not who is the appointed person taking responsibility for First Aid Box?		
9	Have arrangements been made for special needs including access during travel and accommodation (e.g. disability/diet/medical etc)		
11	Have you provided a written briefing and appropriate contact numbers to both the students and their parents?		
13	Have you obtained parental consent?		
14	Has planning for inclement weather/protection from sun been accounted for?		
15	Have you organised adequate insurance cover?		

ADDITIONAL RISK CONTROLS FOR FOREIGN TOURS		Y/N	NOTES
1	Have you verified that all passports are valid and parents informed of possible visa requirements?		
2	Have students been briefed about local customs and behavioural, dress codes etc?		
3	If vaccinations are necessary, have arrangements been made?		
4	Are supervisors clear on how to contact any Emergency Services and Irish Embassy in the country of visit?		
5	Have the students obtained a European Health Insurance Card (available from the Health Service Executive), where relevant, to ensure sufficient medical cover?		

Signed (Group Leader)

Date